

Keeping in Touch

News and notes from
the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches

September 1994

Successful Conferences Held in Dallas

UFMCC sponsored successful Leadership and Department of People of Colors' (DPOC) Conferences in August in Dallas, TX.

Both conferences set new records for the number of registrants: 210 for the Leadership Conference and 143 for the DPOC Conference. More than 100 people attended the pre-conference institute on the sexual ethics of church leaders, and 65 people participated in a church growth conference sponsored by Cathedral of Hope MCC, which also provided meeting space for all the conferences.

The conferences also led to new levels of understanding and spiritual growth. "It's about time! Really on the cutting edge, and yet (somehow) right down to the core of what we must be about," was a typical comment from Leadership Conference evaluation forms. Some conference-goers expressed dissatisfaction with the emphasis on women at the conference, whose theme was "Mutuality, Ministry and the New Millennium." As an attendee noted on one evaluation form, "I really missed the blood songs that I don't agree with."

One of the main speakers at the Leadership Conference was Ms. Mary Hunt of WATER (Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual). "You are in the midst of success problems. Congratulations! Many churches covet your problems: growth, internationalism, and diversity," she said.

The other main speaker was Rev. Lois Wilson of the United

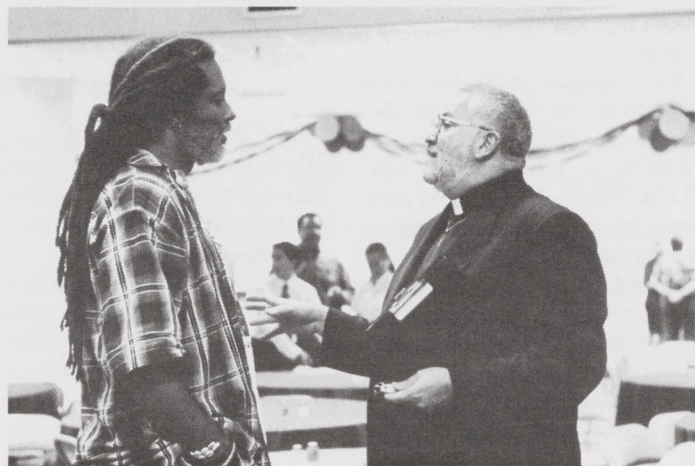


Five UFMCC women elders gleefully shared the stage at Leadership Conference. They are, from left, Rev. Elders Freda Smith, Jeri Ann Harvey, Nancy Wilson, Jean White and Darlene Garner.
Photo by Rev. Kittredge Cherry

Church of Canada, who said, "The risk of breaking taboos is what confers power on men and women. Faith is not belief — it's risking."

Statistics reported at the conference show that the percentage of women among the UFMCC clergy has gradually risen so that in 1993 they outnumbered men. There were 160 female and 158 male clergy in 1993.

Dr. Elias Farajaje-Jones, a queer-identified bisexual anarchist theologian and Howard University professor, was a main speaker at the DPOC Conference. "Sometimes we end up creating gay churches that are really just straight churches in queer-face!" Dr. Farajaje-Jones said. "UFMCC stands today at what could be one of the most exhilarating points in its history. A voice is crying in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way of God.' The question is, is the UFMCC in the



Dr. Elias Farajaje-Jones, left, shares insights with Rev. Elder Troy Perry at the Department of People of Colors' Conference.

Photo by Rev. Kittredge Cherry

wilderness? Are we those voices?" The other main speakers at the DPOC Conference were Mr. Martin Ornelas and Ms. Letitia Gomez of LLEGO, the Latino/a Lesbian and Gay

Organization. "The greatest threat to our community exists within our community: racism, classism, sexism, ageism, and nationalistic baggage," Ms. Gomez told the conference. □



Bishop Sherman Hicks, center, talks with Rev. Elders Don Eastman, left, and Hong Tan.

Photo by Rev. Kittredge Cherry

Elders Meet Bishop Hicks

A historic meeting between the UFMCC Board of Elders and a Lutheran bishop occurred when the elders met in late July in Los Angeles, CA.

The meeting with Rev. Sherman Hicks, bishop for the Chicago area of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), marked the second time that the elders have met with a bishop. The first was in 1989 when they met with Rev. Melvin Wheatley, a United Methodist bishop.

Rev. Hicks said he was amazed at the similarities between the roles of elders in UFMCC and bishops in the ELCA. The challenges and joys faced by both denominations are similar, he said, especially the need for outreach to people of color and other language communities. In the past, the ELCA's growth was based on immigration from Germany and Scandinavia. "The boats

are no longer coming from Europe," Rev. Hicks said.

He challenged the Board of Elders to learn, as he has had to learn, how to focus on the big picture and to model well-being by changing their own work habits and working more effectively with staff.

The October *Keeping in Touch* will include a report on concrete plans made by the elders to position UFMCC for growth and witness in the current socio-political climate. □

MCC New Life Triumphs Over Bigotry

MCC New Life, Matthews, NC, has won a major victory after months of being assailed by neighbors at its recently purchased property.

The town of Matthews had been demanding that the church comply with a laundry list of requirements designed to keep the congregation from occupying the new sanctuary.

For example, the church was told to provide documentation showing that the building can withstand earthquakes and excessive loads of snow.

The attorney for New Life wrote to the County Attorney of Mecklenburg County, asking whether others had to meet the same requirements. The official response was no they

don't, and neither does MCC New Life. All that MCC New Life must do is what any other church must do, which is demonstrate that the building is up to code.

Rev. Bob Darst, pastor, thanks the many who have helped the church with prayers and financial aid in its fight against bigotry. □

Military Chaplains Sought

UFMCC is seeking qualified members of Metropolitan Community Churches who are interested in serving as military chaplains in the Armed Services of the United States.

Candidates for U.S. military chaplaincy must meet the following requirements:

- ▼ Citizen of the United States.
- ▼ Able to meet physical, age and education requirements for military service and officer candidacy.
- ▼ Possess a Master of Divinity degree or an equivalent theological degree, or have completed three resident years of graduate-level study in theology or related subjects at an accredited theological school.
- ▼ Endorsement by an ecclesiastical agency (denomination) recognized by the Armed Forces Chaplains Board.

MCC members interested in service as a military chaplain are encouraged to contact Rev. Elder Donald Eastman, second vice moderator, who is the designated official to represent the UFMCC to the Military Services. Rev. Eastman can be contacted at 5300 Santa Monica Blvd., Suite 304, Los Angeles, CA 90029.

In another development, Rev. Eastman has announced that the UFMCC will cooperate with the Servicemembers Legal Defense Network to develop "friends of the court" briefs from the UFMCC and other religious organizations in support of actions by lesbian and gay military personnel. Several cases are presently in U.S. lower courts and one or two cases may be accepted for consideration by the Supreme Court later this year.

"We believe the courts should be persuaded that this is really an issue of religious freedom," says Rev. Eastman. "The opposition to gays and lesbians serving in the military services is based primarily on religious objections to homosexuality. But we will show that many religious leaders disagree with such objections, and for the government of the U.S. to give selective preference to one religious viewpoint is to deny the religious freedom of others." □



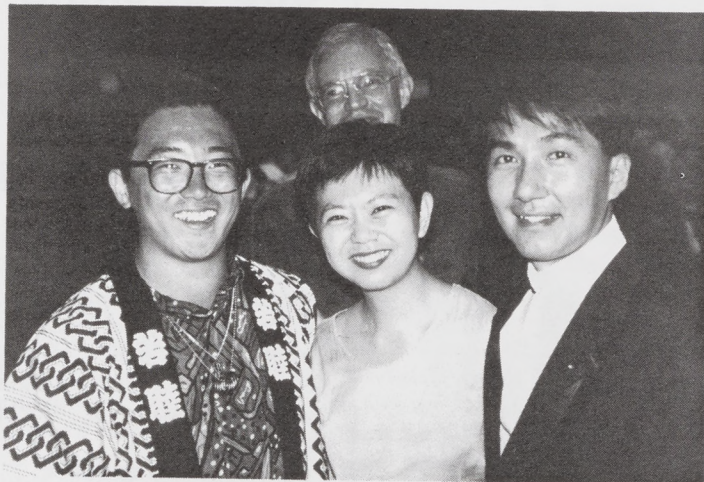
Keeping in Touch is a monthly publication of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches. We are a church of the lesbian and gay community, open to all. Our mission is to call people to new life through the liberating gospel of Jesus Christ, confront injustice through Christian social action, and create a community of healing and reconciliation.

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Send address changes, news and ideas to: *Keeping in Touch*, 5300 Santa Monica Blvd., #304, Los Angeles, CA 90029; (213) 464-5100.

Editorial Board:
Rev. Elder Troy D. Perry,
Moderator
Mr. Ravi Verma,
Director of Administration
Rev. Kittredge Cherry,
Editor

Deadline for each issue: 15th of previous month.
Ms. Nancy Fackrell, Typesetting



Outreach to Japan is being conducted by Mr. Eiki Yoshikawa, left, and Ms. Yoshimi Kaji, center. They are pictured with Rev. Elder Hong Tan, right, and Mr. Fabrizio Melano, rear.

Photo by Mr. William Tom

MCC Reaches Out To Japan

A monthly newsletter for lesbian and gay Christians in Japan is being published in Japanese by two MCC members.

Ms. Yoshimi Kaji of MCC New York, NY, and Mr. Eiki Yoshikawa of MCC San Jose, CA, began publishing *Kirisuto-no-Kaze* in March. Both are Japanese citizens who are spending a few years in the United States. Each issue of their newsletter includes a "Message of the Month" written by Mr. Yoshikawa and news articles on topics ranging from AIDS to parental relations written or translated by Ms. Kaji.

"The purpose of this newsletter is the networking of Japanese gay Christians living in Japan," Mr. Yoshikawa said. "We hope they'll get to know that there's nothing wrong with them and they're not alone. In the future, I hope the readers will meet for sharing and worship. My ultimate goal is starting MCC in Japan." Mr. Yoshikawa plans to attend Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, CA.

Mr. Yoshikawa's first contact with UFMCC was a letter he wrote several years ago to the International Headquarters in Los Angeles, CA, which referred him to the nearest local church, at that time, which was MCC Austin, TX. (Later he moved to San Jose.) Last year Ms. Kaji called the International Headquarters shortly before leaving Japan to study in New York. She expressed her interest in helping create a lesbian/gay Christian ministry in Japan. The International Headquarters introduced her to Mr. Yoshikawa, and their partnership began.

For more information, persons may contact Mr. Yoshikawa at 1035 Aster Ave. #1230, Sunnyvale, CA 94086. Phone (408) 243-5523. □

MCC Winnipeg Busy With New Activities in Canada

By Mr. Gord Jackson

MCC Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, has been unusually active in recent months.

The church conducted a Holocaust Sunday commemoration in April, with an edited reading of Martin Sherman's play "Bent" comprising the main portion of the service. Attendance was above average.

Thirty people braved a violent thunderstorm to attend a personal safety seminar cosponsored by MCC Winnipeg and Victims of Homophobic Violence on May 18. A local police official

New Clergy Licensed

Congratulations to all 34 of the following new clergy, who were approved for initial licensure on Aug. 1. The districts with the largest number of new clergy are the European District and Southwest District with five newly licensed clergy and Gulf Lower Atlantic District with six. The clergy licensed this year include 14 men and 20 women.

Australian District

Julie Daley

European District

Jane Clarke

Lesley Corkhill

Stewart Harrison

Doreen Shambrook

Paul Whiting

Gulf Lower Atlantic District

Richard W. Carson

Robert Johnson

Clifford Morrison

W. James Richards

Glenna Shepherd

Beverly Stephenson

Great Lakes District

Wayne Bradley

Bradley Mickelson

Mid-Central District

Mark Lee

Marianne McPherson

Northwest District

Roberta Booth

Alan Eddington

Sharna Sutherin

Alfred White

South Central District

Vicki Anderson

Dexter Brecht

Sherry Hilliard

Lou Ann Jordan

Southeast District

Rebecca Edwards

Carol Hale

Phyllis Motta

Stephen Steele

Southwest District

Julie Heckman

Kathleen Patrick

Patrick Stout

Elaine Thomas

Sandra Turnbull

World Church Extension

Iris Sagers

Watch Out, YMCA!

Four members of St. Luke's MCC, Jacksonville, FL, are trying to get a "family membership" at the local YMCA.

The church is collecting signatures on a petition asking the YMCA to change its policy, which allows only people who are legally married and have a marriage license to obtain the discounted family memberships. The case has received local media coverage.

Those confronting the YMCA are Rev. Frankye White, pastor, and her partner Ms. Lori Sinnett, and Ms. Vickie Buchanan and Ms. Barbara Scifres.

Some YMCAs in other cities have more liberal policies because local boards of directors define "family" as they choose.

"We would like to challenge other MCCs to confront the YMCAs in their cities," said Ms. Elizabeth Forbell, St. Luke's administrator. "We would also welcome any information from anyone that might help our case." □

affirmed two important points: A) City streets are for everyone, not just heterosexuals, and B) The police are beginning to recognize their responsibilities to the gay, lesbian and bisexual community and educate themselves accordingly.

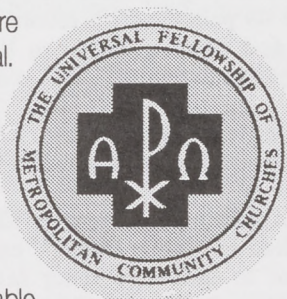
Thanks to the efforts of member Duane Baker, MCC Winnipeg recently received a signed authorization to use the official logo of the United Nations' International Year of the Family. The church then held a specially designed worship service on the theme "Celebration of Family" on June 5. □

NEW FROM CHURCH SERVICES!

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Shipping* _____

Total Amount Due _____

(All Payments Must Be Made In U.S. Dollars)

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No. _____ Exp. _____

Signature _____

MAIL TO: UFMCC Church Services, 5300 Santa Monica Blvd, Suite 304, Los Angeles, CA 90029 213/464-5100 Fax 213/464-2123

Job Opening World Church Extension Administrator Begins Nov.1, 1994

I. Duties and Responsibilities: The Administrator is responsible for the development, implementation, and coordination of UFMCC policy, strategic planning, implementation and coordination of World Church Extension.

- (a) Fund Raising/Public Relations
- (b) Development and Oversight, including responsibility for leadership training, leadership review and reporting processes, approval process for new churches, and coordination of visits to WCE areas.
- (c) Administration, including responsibility for budget, financial management, and setting policies.

II. Qualification Requirements:

- ▼ Judiciary/Pastoral experience
- ▼ Knowledge of UFMCC
- ▼ Cross-cultural work experience
- ▼ Willingness to travel
- ▼ Fund raising experience
- ▼ Program development and management experience.

III. Salary Range:

U.S. \$31,500 to \$35,000

IV. Location: Los Angeles, California

V. Reports to: Director of Administration

Send application by
Sept. 15, 1994
to:

Mr. Ravi Verma
UFMCC
5300 Santa Monica Blvd.
Suite 304
Los Angeles, CA 90029
Phone: 213/464-5100
Fax: 213/464-2123

Around The Fellowship

Praises

Rev. Herbert Evans, of the executive committee of the UFMCC Department of People of Colors, was appointed to the board of the AIDS National Interfaith Network. He recently attended the National Council of Religious AIDS Networks meeting in Washington, DC.

Rev. Glenna Shepherd, pastor of **Christ Covenant MCC**, Stone Mountain, GA, served as music director of the 20-year anniversary conference of the Evangelical and Ecumenical Women's Caucus in July in Chicago, IL. Rev. Shepherd was also one of nine panelists on "Religion: The Greatest Story Never Told" at Unity 94, a gathering of minority journalists, in July in Atlanta, GA.

Rev. Jon Bullock, MCC clergy and executive director of the Hawaii Council of Churches, was honored recently by the Shinto and Buddhist community of Hawaii. He was extended the privilege of ringing the Hiroshima Peace Bell on Aug. 6, the 49th anniversary of the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima, Japan. Each year this honor is granted to the one person who best exemplifies the peace effort in the islands.

Emmanuel MCC, Albuquerque, NM, raised \$30,000 in 30 days to purchase a building. The dedication will be Oct. 2.

Rev. Christine Oscar, pastor of **St. Mary's MCC**, Greensboro, NC, was given the annual Mark Drum AIDS Memorial Award for outstanding community service by *Q-Notes*.

Prayers

Mr. Bernie Barbour's father died shortly before the Department of People of Colors (DPOC) Conference in August. Mr. Barbour, DPOC executive director, was unable to attend the conference he helped to plan. This loss is particularly difficult coupled with the death of his mother in June.

MCC of the Desert, Cathedral City, CA, has closed its doors. However, **MCC Long Beach** has a cell group meeting in the area which may be the seed for a new church in the future.

Top 20 Tithes - July 1994

1.	Cathedral of Hope MCC, Dallas, TX	US \$	10,354.79
2.	MCC of the Resurrection, Houston, TX		6,328.78
3.	MCC Washington, Washington, DC		3,352.72
4.	Sunshine Cathedral MCC, Ft. Lauderdale, FL		3,201.07
5.	St. Luke's MCC, Jacksonville, FL		1,862.51
6.	MCC Long Beach, Long Beach, CA		1,754.13
7.	MCC Toronto, Ontario, Canada	CAN \$	1,576.95
8.	MCC San Diego, San Diego, CA		1,570.40
9.	MCC of the Rockies, Denver, CO		1,533.50
10.	MCC San Francisco, San Francisco, CA		1,499.20
11.	Church of the Trinity MCC, Sarasota, FL		1,415.60
12.	Agape' MCC, Ft. Worth, TX		1,247.01
13.	First MCC of Atlanta, Atlanta, GA		1,178.92
14.	Spirit of Hope MCC, Kansas City, MO		1,154.66
15.	MCC Richmond, Richmond, VA		1,100.04
16.	MCC New York, New York City, NY		1,098.28
17.	Church of Our Savior MCC, Boca Raton, FL		1,020.95
18.	Joy MCC, Orlando, FL		908.60
19.	Holy Covenant MCC, Hinsdale, IL		877.85
20.	MCC Charlotte, Charlotte, NC		776.31

{These figures reflect the 10 percent of each local church's monthly income that is reported to Fellowship headquarters.}

Transitions

Rev. Elder Willem Hein is the new interim administrator for World Church Extension. He will arrive in Los Angeles, CA, in late August to begin this position, and continue until the new administrator is appointed Nov. 1.

Rev. Marge Ragona has been called as the new pastor of **Covenant MCC**, Birmingham, AL.

Rev. Wayne Bradley was installed Aug. 27 as senior pastor of **Good Shepherd Parish Christ the Redeemer MCC**, Chicago, IL.

Ms. Kathy Beall was installed Aug. 28 as the new pastor of **St. Jude's MCC**, Wilmington, NC.

Rev. Patricia Voelker begins new pastoral duties at **Community Fellowship MCC**, Columbia, SC in August.

Rev. Katie Cassidy was elected pastor of **Oasis MCC**, Phoenix, AZ.

Revs. Wendy Foxworth and Ken Martin terminated their co-pastorate of **MCC Austin, TX**, effective July 31, and Rev. Martin was elected senior pastor.

The **UFMCC Board of Pensions (USA)** announced the election of **Rev. Judy Davenport** as vice president filling the unexpired term of the late **Paul Sheldon**.

Ms. Inez Berry, mother of UFMCC evangelist **Rev. Delores Berry**, has moved to a skilled nursing facility in Lancaster, PA.

Ms. Dana Cagle follows **Rev. Christen Chew** as pastor of **Free Spirit MCC** at the California Institute for Women in Frontera, CA.

Rev. Kathleen Williams was appointed clergy on staff at **MCC of the Quad Cities**, Davenport, IA, effective June 1.

Rev. Ken Hull joins the staff of **St. Luke's MCC**, Jacksonville, FL, as its first associate pastor and music director.

Revs. Marian Fink and Pam Crocker resigned the pastorate at **Family of Faith MCC**, Jenks, OK and are relocating to Kansas City, MO, where Rev. Fink plans to earn a doctorate at St. Paul's Seminary.

Top 20 Per Capita - July 1994

1.	SisterSpirit, Portland, OR	US\$	69.91
2.	MCC Eugene, Eugene, OR		48.93
3.	MCC Panama City, Panama City, FL		44.05
4.	MCC Ocean of Life, Costa Mesa, CA		36.05
5.	MCC Ventura, Ventura, CA		35.49
6.	MCC/Lower Mainland, Mapleridge BC	CAN\$	35.45
7.	MCC of the Resurrection, Houston, TX		35.34
8.	MCC Johnson County, Lenexa, KS		32.48
9.	Holy Covenant MCC, Hinsdale, IL		29.46
10.	MCC of the Quad Cities, Rock Island, IL		25.90
11.	Open Arms MCC, Rochester, NY		25.65
12.	MCC Long Beach, Long Beach, CA		23.36
13.	Tri-State MCC, Evansville, IN		23.24
14.	Eternal Light MCC, Olympia, WA		22.76
15.	Oasis MCC, Phoenix, AZ		22.53
16.	MCC New Haven, New Haven, CT		22.48
17.	Overlake MCC, Bellevue, WA		22.02
18.	MCC with a Vision, Longview, TX		21.73
19.	MCC of the Palm Beaches, W. Palm Beach, FL		21.59
20.	Christ the Liberator MCC, New Brunswick, NJ		21.39

{These figures reflect average individual weekly offerings to the local church.}



Five South Africans attended the recent UFMCC conferences in Dallas, TX. Pictured together in Dallas are, from left, Ms. Nomsa Khumalo, Rev. Andre Muller, Rev. Troy Perry, Ms. Olga Kuschke, Rev. Tsietso Thandekiso and, in front, Rev. Daniel DeKock.

Photo by Rev. Kittredge Cherry

Five South Africans Attend UFMCC Conferences

The Departments of Ecumenical Witness and Ministry and World Church Extension were delighted to welcome five South Africans who had been invited by UFMCC to attend Leadership and Department of People of Colors' Conferences, in Dallas, TX. After the conferences, they visited other MCCs in Texas and California.

Rev. Daniel DeKock, Ms. Olga Kuschke, Rev. Tsietso Thandekiso, Ms. Nomsa Khumalo and Rev. Andre Muller met with representatives of the Board of World Church Extension to discuss exploring their participation in UFMCC while they were in Dallas. This group represents two churches that have an outreach into the gay and lesbian community in South Africa. One, the Universal Christian Community Fellowship Church, is located in Johannesburg and is pastored by Rev. Thandekiso. The other, the Reforming Church, a church of about 200 members in Pretoria, is pastored by Rev. Muller.

The Board of World Church Extension will continue dialogue with these individuals to see if there is a possibility of their affiliation with UFMCC. □

Moving?

The *Keeping in Touch* staff wants to ensure that subscribers receive every single issue. If you have moved recently, don't forget to send your new address to: Keeping in Touch, c/o UFMCC, 5300 Santa Monica Blvd., Suite 304, Los Angeles, CA 90029. □

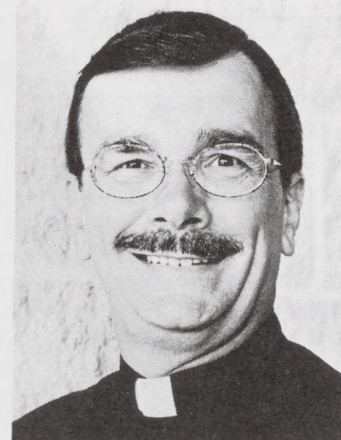
Support Set For MCC Manila

Plans have been made to provide increased assistance to MCC Manila, the Philippines.

Rev. Ed Paul, assistant district coordinator of the South Central District, is willing to go to Manila for three to six months over the next year to serve as a trainer/teacher for the congregation and its three student clergy. The UFMCC Board of World Church Extension has launched a fund campaign to raise \$10,000 by Nov. 1 for Rev. Paul's travel and living expenses for the Manila ministry. The South Central District already pledged \$5,000 toward this goal. The ultimate goal is for the church to have indigenous leadership by 1995.

Donations for the Manila project may be sent to UFMCC, 5300 Santa Monica Blvd., #304, Los Angeles, CA 90029.

"The young new MCC'ers in Manila are the experts on Fili-



Rev. Ed Paul

pino life, politics, culture and spirituality, but we can provide the tools of UFMCC's message, polity and experience," said Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson, UFMCC vice moderator. □

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BOOKS & PUBLICATIONS

Biblical "condemnation" of gays examined by Columbia University graduate with a decade of UFMCC membership. \$3.95 for 26 page booklet. H&S/KT, POB 221841, Charlotte, NC 28222.

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POSITIONS AVAILABLE

New Life MCC seeking part-time Pastor whose calling and faith will shepherd us to support a full-time position, development and expansion of our ministries in Tidewater, VA. Must be licensed or in the final stages of UFMCC licensure; prefer bachelor's degree, with three years minimum experience as UFMCC clergy/student clergy. To obtain expanded information please send resume to P.O. Box 1026, Norfolk, VA 23501.

Growing, Christ-Centered Church seeking new Pastor. Send resume to: Pastoral Search Committee, Family of Faith MCC, P.O. Box 382, Jenks, OK 74037-0382.

MCC Huntsville, a church on the move! Seeks experienced, dynamic Senior Pastor to stimulate growth in our newly constructed church. Come grow with us! Send resume by October 15 to Search Committee, c/o Gail Parker, 4316 Baywood Drive, SW, Huntsville, AL 35805.

Interested in a job with UFMCC World Church Extension? See ad on page 4.